Project Proposal

Proposal Title: **Little Baullie Mesa Fuels Reduction and Vegetative Restoration** **Proposal Number:** 1404

DWR Region: Southeastern Region **Lead Agency:** BLM **County:** San Juan

Project Manager: Brian Keating **PM Phone:** 4356133717 **Regional Priority:** Within Focus Area

Project Type: Terrestrial Habitat **Proposed Start Date:** 10/1/2009

Project Location: The treatment is along Little Baullie Mesa, which is located roughly thirteen miles east of the city of Blanding in the southeastern portion of Utah

Project Description: BLM will utilize a combination of hand cutting/piling, pile burning, bullhog/mastication, aerial seeding, and ATV seeding on 1,650 acres to reduce fuel loads and enhance wildlife habitat.

Description of Problem/Need: In the early 1960's, the BLM reduced the pinyon-juniper woodlands along the Little Baullie Mesa top through the use of an anchor chain-type treatment in which trees were upended and root balls exposed. Slash created from the chaining was left on site and much of it remains today adding to the fuels load problems. Maintenance of the chaining has not occurred since it was implemented and as a result, pinyon and juniper trees have re-established and become the dominant vegetation on the mesa. The tree canopy has become closed which has robbed the understory of needed light and resources needed to grow. Currently, the mesa consists of dense stands of pinyon and juniper trees with very little to no understory grasses, shrubs or forb species.

Due to the lack of vegetative ground cover and a history of overgrazing, the mesa has experienced a significant loss of biodiversity, loss of wildlife habitat and accelerated rates of erosion, which are now compromising one of Southeast Utah's richest archeological sites. Elements critical to an ecosystem that may result from or be affected by an uncharacteristically intense wildland fire or from lengthy periods of drought include accelerated erosion; altered and/or declining soil development and losses in sustainable nutrient cycling; loss of natural hydrologic pathways; deterioration or loss of watershed integrity resulting in degradation of water quality and quantity; and deterioration of habitat and habitat diversity.

The goal of treating vegetation is to restore ecosystem health by reproducing the natural variability, stability, and diversity of the vegetative communities within the project area. In addition, successfully completed treatments enhance public and firefighter safety by providing an increased range of suppression strategies.

Objectives: The Moab Fire Zone and Monticello Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) propose to reduce vegetative fuels and implement vegetative/habitat restoration activities within an approximate 1,700-acre project area of public lands administered by the BLM.

Project objectives include: 1) greater spacing, 2) open sage meadows and light surface fuels would be the encouragement of understory growth, 3) the reduced potential for high-intensity fire, and 4) the protection of cultural resources.

Relevance to Strategic Plans: The WAP focus areas are the same as the UPCD focus areas. Little Baullie Mesa falls within one of the WAP focus areas of SE Utah. The proposed action for Little Baullie is derived from The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), which guides all BLM resource management actions. Other national policies which direct and guide management actions include The National Fire Plan, Healthy Forest Restoration Act and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act 1978 to name a few. In addition, the proposed action is consistent with the 2008 Monticello Resource Management Plan (RMP) and the Moab Fire Zone Fire Management Plan.

Potential Risks: A delay would continue to place the natural vegetation, wildlife habitat and archeological resources at risk from the effects of a catastrophic wildfire and substantial degradation in habitat due to reduced biodiversity and erosion.

Proposed Methods: Treatments would be implemented through a combination of mechanical and hand cutting, utilizing a bullhog or mechanical shredder along with chainsaws and other hand tools. The objectives of this alternative would be to create an assortment of mixed-density pinyon/juniper groupings with treatment ranging from no cutting to fifty feet canopy spacing. Various activities would be continued in unit increments until all targeted vegetation within the project area had received treatment, although areas with existing sagebrush and/or native grasses would be avoided.

Units within the entire project area would be seeded following or prior to treatment with both native and selected non-native grasses, forbs and browse species. Seed selection is based upon the most current data regarding the establishment of species likely to promote successional changes toward the desired vegetative community. Seeding would be accomplished with a broadcast spreader or harrow dragged behind an ATV, or by aerial methods. Seeded portions of the treatment area would be rested from grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons following seeding.

Aerial application of seed on 1,650 acres would occur in the fall of 2009. Mechanical removal (bullhog and hand thinning) on 1,300 acres would follow the seed application. Other treatments include 150 acres of thinning/pile, 150 acres of pile burning, and 150 acres of ATV harrow. It is anticipated that the vegetative thinning and seeding of the entire project area would be completed no later than June 2010.

Shapefile Name: HPD 2010\GIS Shape Files - Proposals\SER\1404.shp **Seed Source:** GBRC

UPCD Reg Team Coord Date: 1/20/2009

Project Proposal

Proposed NEPA Action:

Proposed Arch Action:

☑ **Vegetation Monitoring** ☐ **Wildlife Monitoring**

Monitoring Information: The BLM fuels program will utilize a series of rangeland plots and fuel transects to monitor the effectiveness of the fuels treatments and subsequent revegetation treatments. All monitoring activities will involve quantitative and qualitative techniques and be repeated annually for the first three years following treatment. All research studies will result in reports, which will be available for other agencies and partners.

Grazing Management: While the Little Baullie Mesa allotment has received no livestock use for over five years the current permittee, the Ute Mountain Ute tribe, trails cattle through the allotment for two weeks each year in the spring and fall. The existing permit agreement is for 508 cattle from October 16th through May 31st. Grazing use in this allotment will be reassessed in the future subsequent to the success of the proposed

SPECIES BENEFITING

Elk | Mule Deer | Big Free-tailed Bat | Fringed Myotis

Peregrine Falcon

LAND OWNERSHIP

Owner		Acres
BLM		1650
	Total	1650

PROPOSED FUNDING

Source		Amount Requested	Date Approved	Amount Approved
Unfunded Balance		$83,053.00		$0.00
BLM FLR		$687,953.00		$0.00
BLM ARRA		$85,800.00	3/13/2009	$85,800.00
	Totals	***$856,806.00***		***$85,800.00***

PROPOSED BUDGET

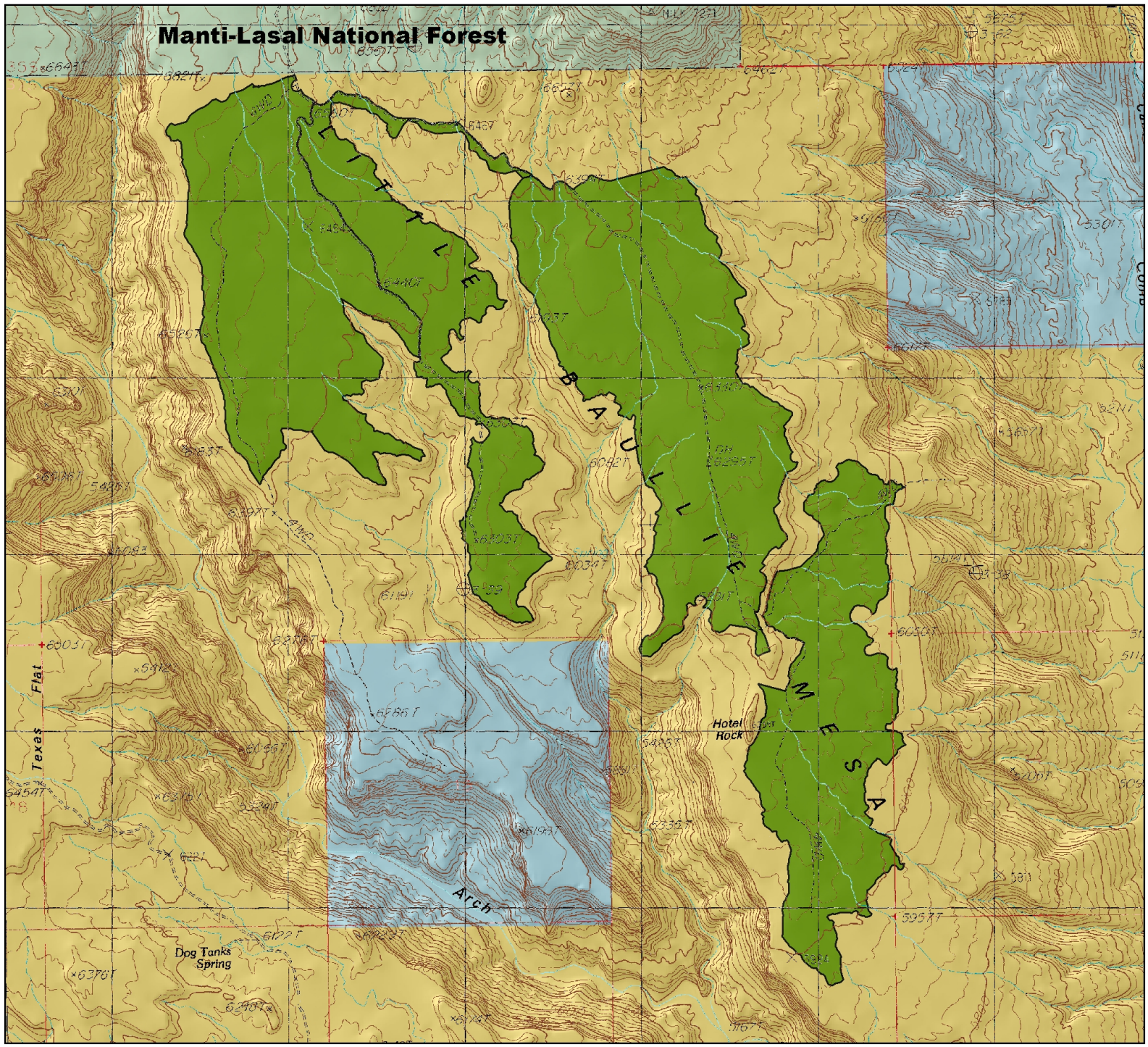
Item	Description		DWR Account	Partner Contrib.
NEPA			$0.00	$15,000.00
Contractual Services	aerial seeding 1,650 acres @ $12/acre		$19,800.00	$0.00
Contractual Services	1,300 acres of bullhog		$0.00	$487,500.00
Seed (GBRC)	$90.33/acre for 1,650 acres		$149,053.00	$14,703.00
Archaeological Survey			$0.00	$75,500.00
Monitoring			$0.00	$5,000.00
Contractual Services	150 acres of thin/pile		$0.00	$75,000.00
Contractual Services	150 acres of pile burning		$0.00	$11,250.00
Contractual Services	150 acres of ATV harrow		$0.00	$4,000.00
		Totals	***$168,853.00***	***$687,953.00***

Little Baullie Mesa Project Area (1653 Acres)

UPCD Proposal Map

State of Utah

1:31,000



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Created December 4, 2008
Gabriel J. Bissonette

LEGEND

- Little Baullie Mesa Project Area
- Municipality
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- US Forest Service (USFS)
- State